

for exports as well as the policy environment. As per the DGCI&S quick estimates for April-December, 1996-97, commodities like tea, coffee, rice, cashew, fruits and vegetables, gems and jewellery, leather manufactures, man-made yarn fabrics, etc., jute manufactures, Handicrafts and Plastic and Lineoleum Products have registered negative growth.

During April-December, 1996-97, the value of exports as well as imports have shown increase though the growth rates are at lower levels than during the previous year period. Measures for promoting exports are continuously being taken. These include changes in policies and procedures for providing an export friendly environment, interaction with trade and industry, consultations with the State Governments for involving States in export promotion, de-bottlenecking of crucial infrastructure facilities for exports, meeting of joint commissions and bilateral fora and dialogue with partner countries.

[English]

Electoral Reforms

*115. SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the proposals and suggestions for reforms in Electoral System and the laws relating thereto submitted by the Election Commission of India to the Union Government which are pending as on January 1, 1997;

(b) whether the Government propose to consult various political parties on these proposals and suggestions; and

(c) if so, by when the Government are likely to take a decision in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Electoral Reforms being a continuous process, it is not feasible to indicate the exact time by which Government would take a decision in the matter. Government, however, is keen to finalise a comprehensive package on Electoral Reforms as early as possible.

Statement

Important Proposals of the Election Commission which are pending as on 1st January, 1997.

1. The Election Commission should have an independent secretariat and the expenditure on the Commission should be 'charged'.

2. No candidate should be allowed to contest from more than one constituency.
3. Automatic disqualification of a person found guilty of corrupt practice.
4. Enhancement of required minimum number of valid votes polled to save security deposit from 'one-sixth' to 'one-fourth' thereof.
5. Compulsory maintenance of accounts by political parties and audit thereof.
6. The existing provision in section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, relating to registration of political parties, should not be deleted and there should be a specific provision to de-register a party if it violates the undertaking given under the section. The power to de-register should vest in the High Court.
7. Mobilisation of employees of Public Sector Undertakings, autonomous bodies, statutory and non-statutory bodies aided by the Government etc., for election duties as also to provide that employees of such bodies including local bodies could also be deployed for election duties outside their State.
8. Restoration of pre- 1974 position in respect of election expenses.
9. Increase in the ceiling on election expenses as laid in Rule 90 of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961.
10. The officer nominated or designated as Chief Electoral Officer should not be allowed to do any other work except with the approval of the Election Commission.
11. Statutory backing to provisions of Part VII of the Model Code of Conduct.
12. Empowering Election Commission to issue instructions and to make recommendations in connection with elections.

Privatisation of Coal Sector

*116. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO :
SHRI NAMDEO DIWATHE :

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to privatise different areas in the coal sector;

(b) if so, the details of the plan and areas under different coal companies identified for the purpose;

(c) whether the power and steel companies of public sector have also been offered some blocks for coal mining and allied activities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?